

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 2201
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER SUWAIDI

1. I PAID MY FAREWELL CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER SUWAIDI
AUGUST 11 -- ACTUALLY HIS REMARKS REPORTED BELOW OCCURRED
DURING TWO MEETINGS I HAD WITH HIM LAST FEW DAYS.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WAS UNPLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO
HEAR OF MY DEPARTURE FROM HERE. I SAID INDEED THE NEWS
HAD COME QUITE SUDDENLY. HE ASKED IF WASHINGTON REALIZED
I WAS LIKED BY EVERYBODY IN ABU DHABI AND DOING EXCELLENT
JOB. I SAID I COULDN'T RECALL THEIR HAVING SAID IT IN
SO MANY WORDS RECENTLY, BUT I COULD ONLY CONCLUDE FROM
THE ABSENCE OF CRITICISM THAT I HADN'T BEEN MAKING ANY
CATASTROPHIC MISTAKES. I HAD LONG AGO CONCLUDED THAT
NO NEWS WAS GOOD NEWS AS IT CONCERNED DEPARTMENT OF STATE.
SUWAIDI SAID HE WONDERED IF HE SHOULD MAKE APPEAL TO
SECRETARY TO KEEP ME ON HERE. I SAID I WAS MOST GRATEFUL
FOR THIS GESTURE AND FOR THE FEELINGS WHICH LAY BEHIND
IT, BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT WOULD DO ANY GOOD. SUWAIDI
SAID IT APPEARED THEN THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS
DEVELOPMENT.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE THOUGHT I COULD LOOK BACK
ON MY TWO YEARS HERE AS FRUITFUL PERIOD FOR RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE US AND UAE. WHEN I ARRIVED THERE WAS STILL
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"A SHADOW" OVER US - UAE RELATIONS. THIS WAS NOW DIS-

PELLED AND THERE WAS COOPERATION IN MANY FIELDS. SUWAIDI WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SAY MY OWN EFFORTS HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THIS. I SAID I WAS AT ANY RATE PLEASED TO SEE AMONG UAE LEADERS WHAT I SINCERELY BELIEVED TO BE A GREATER AWARENESS OF THE MULTIPLICITY OF INTERESTS OUR TWO COUNTRIES SHARED. THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM WAS STILL THERE AND WE WOULD NEED THE ASSISTANCE OF MODERATE ARAB STATES LIKE THE UAE TO HELP MAKE FUTURE PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE. IN THE MEANTIME WE MUST ALSO NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE MUCH WIDER INTEREST OUR TWO COUNTRIES SHARED IN MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING A WORLD SYSTEM THAT ENABLED COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UAE TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN DESTINIES AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS FREE OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. SUWAIDI NODDED VIGOROUSLY IN ASSENT.

4. SUWAIDI SAID ASIDE FROM BILATERAL RELATIONS, HE HAD ALWAYS FELT HE HAD "FRIEND" IN ME WHOM HE COULD CONSULT FRANKLY ON UAE'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS. HE BELIEVED AND HE HOPED HE WAS ACCURATE IN THIS-THAT BOTH USG AND MYSELF PERSONALLY HAD BEEN FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD HIS OWN CHERISHED OBJECTIVE OF STRENGTHENING UAE FEDERATION. HE WENT ON AT SOME LENGTH ALONG FAMILIAR LINES WHICH REFLECT HIS OWN FRUSTRATION ON THIS FRONT -- HOW HE AND ZAYED HAD SHOWN SUPERHUMAN PATIENCE WITH OTHER RULERS, HOW IT WAS UNFAIR OF THEM TO EXPECT SHAIKH ZAYED TO BEAR ENTIRE BURDEN OF FEDERATION WITHOUT ANY HELP FROM THEM, ETC. HE REFERRED TO SHAIKH RASHED'S OBSTRUCTIONIST ATTITUDE AND ASKED ME WHETHER I THOUGHT THERE WERE REALLY SPECIFIC THINGS HE WANTED CHANGED, OR WHETHER THIS WAS ALL A SMOKE SCREEN FOR JUST NOT WANTING THE FEDERATION TO DEVELOP FURTHER. I SAID AFTER TWO YEARS OF TALKING WITH HIM IT SEEMED TO ME THE LATTER SURMISE WAS THE ONLY POSSIBLE CONCLUSION. WITH SIGH, SUWAIDI SAID HE HAD COME TO SAME CONCLUSION.

5. I SAID I WISHED I COULD OFFER SOME USEFUL SUGGESTIONS BUT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THIS WAS PERHAPS ONE OF THOSE PROBLEMS THAT HAD TO BE SOLVED MAINLY BY TIME. I TOLD SUWAIDI I HAD ABOUT YEAR AGO VOLUNTERED TO BOTH SHAIKH

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RASHED AND SHAIKH SULTAN OF SHARJAH MY VIEW THAT IN SPITE OF DIFFERENCES AMONG RULERS THEY SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THEIR SINGULAR GOOD FORTUNE IN HAVING AS FOUR PRINCIPAL RULERS IN UAE ALL MEN OF BASIC GOOD SENSE, WHO WERE NON-IDEOLOGICAL AND IN THEIR OWN WAYS DEDICATED TO WELFARE OF THEIR PEOPLE. THERE WAS NOT A QADHAFI OR A SHAKHBOOT AMONG THEM, AND SINCE ARAB WORLD WAS PRETTY GOOD AT PRODUCING CRACKPOTS AS POLITICAL LEADERS, THIS

WAS BLESSING THEY SHOULD NOT TAKE TOTALLY FOR GRANTED. THEY COULD BE MISSING HISTORICAL OPPORTUNITY IF THEY DID NOT ACT NOW, WHILE THEY WERE ALL ALIVE, TO PLACE THEIR COUNTRY ON STRONG FONDATIONS. AND WHAT, ASKED SUWAIDI, DID SHAIKH RASHED SAY TO THAT? " HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, HE JUST LISTENED." SUWAIDI LAUGHED. "THAT'S ALL HE EVER DOES WHEN SHAIKH ZAYED OR I TRY TO TALK WITH HIM."

6. MY FINAL MEETING WITH SUWAIDI CAME AFTER SHAIKH ZAYED'S ANNOUNCEMENT HE WAS DETERMINED TO STEP DOWN AS PRESIDENT. I ASKED FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT. SUWAIDI SAID ZAYED WAS GENUINELY FED-UP, BUT HE SEEMED ALSO TO THINK ZAYED WOULD EVENTUALLY BE PERSUADED TO REVERSE HIS DECISION. HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE CONSULTATIONS AMONG THE RULERS AFTER RAMADHAN THAT WOULD SORT THINGS OUT. SUWAIDI SAID HE THOUGHT MANNER IN WHICH ZAYED HAD CHOSEN TO MAKE HIS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS UNFORTUNATE, VIZ. TO JOURNALIST REPRESENTING FOREIGN NEWSPAPER. STERNER

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